

Urges Bipartisan Response to Opponents of Health Care Reform Who Have Crossed the Line

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) today condemned acts of violence and repeated threats directed at Members of Congress and their offices. Since the passage of health care reform legislation by the U.S. House on Sunday night, acts of vandalism were committed against Democratic congressional offices in Arizona and New York. Threats of intimidation and violence have been received by numerous congressional offices, including Congresswoman McCollum's. The following are excerpts from a letter received in Congresswoman McCollum's office today in which a shredded American flag was sent with the letter:

Here's how I will do my part. I will fight you with all my might. I will hound you. I will intimidate you and your family. I will scream at you. I will rewrite your history. I will physically out strong-arm you. I will shame you, your family and your friends. I will send you signs exclaiming what I think of you.... I will call you what you are; [expletives]. Whatever it takes and as long as it takes. It will never stop until you are gone!

Congresswoman McCollum responded:

"I will not back down in the face of attacks, threats, and violence. I do not regret my vote, and I will proudly stand in the face of opposition and defend my support of health care reform.

"This has gone beyond freedom of speech. This has gone to direct intimidation with intent to harm, and that is criminal action. The Republican and Democratic leadership need to stand together with one bipartisan voice and condemn these acts of vigilantism. The perpetrators of these acts are trying to intimidate Members of Congress, their families, and Congressional staff.

"In our democracy, no one has the right to threaten harm. This behavior is not being democratic. This is not being patriotic. This is vigilantism, and it will not be tolerated."

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.

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